

Sisters' Department.

OUR S. S. C. E.

✓ DEAR SISTERS OF THE BRETHREN CHURCH, a word to you today, an earnest word of entreaty in regard to the Sisters Christian Endeavor. At our National Conference two years ago, when the S. S. C. E. was reorganized, and its constitution revised, and made so simple and practical, that we felt sure it must meet the approbation of all the sisters, a resolution was passed and put on record in the report of the proceedings of the Conference, that all the Sister's Societies of the church whether called Christian Endeavor, Aid Society, Mite Society, or Sewing circle should be reorganized under the new constitution for Christian Endeavor. Of course it was only a resolution, but we earnestly hoped that all the societies would adopt it. Nearly two years have now passed away and our hopes have not been realized. There are as yet comparatively few S. S. C. E.'s while almost every church in the brotherhood has a society of some kind. Why is it?

↗ Surely not that any of the churches can find objection to the object of the Christian Endeavor. So far as I have been able to ascertain, this plea has never been offered, but the one predominating reason given is "we need all our money at home." Now I do not doubt that there is truth in this. Times are hard, most of our churches are not wealthy, and there are so many needs at home. At some places, new church houses are badly needed, or church debts have been incurred, or the congregation seems taxed to the utmost to keep up the church expenses and the members feel that they need every cent they can raise to support the cause at home. But with the same propriety the christian family who need a new dwelling house, or who owe a debt upon their home, or who find it quite an effort to keep up the family expenses, might plead that they cannot give any thing for the support of the church at home because they need all their money in their families. In many cases it is true that we need all our money to supply our needs, real and fancied, and even then we must deny ourselves some things we

would very much desire to have. But if we keep all our money on this plea, refusing to give to the cause of Christ, would we not be robbing God of his dues, would not our hearts grow more and more selfish, more and more sordid, until there would be little of Christ-likeness left in us? And if all others did the same, where would be the cause of Christ?

We could use, and that to good advantage, in our home church, all the money we can raise in our congregations, put forth every effort we may, but is there not a possibility of congregations robbing God as well as individual hearts? And is there not a possibility of congregations becoming selfish and sordid, as well as individual hearts? If, of two brothers, one were in moderate circumstances, and the other in need and poverty, would we not utterly condemn the one if he refused to give even a small mite to the needy brother? Remember the Scripture admonition and promises. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none. Freely ye have received, freely give. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver. The liberal soul shall be made fat. Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom."

The widow with two mites gave all that she had. Who will say that she didn't need it at home? But her soul was liberal toward the Lord, and no one of us ever questions but that she was richer for what she gave. I tell you, dear Sisters, there is a blessing in giving. If out of our abundance we give, there is a blessing for us; but if out of our poverty and need we give, there will be a greater blessing. Our churches at home will be blessed for what we give to the cause of Christ away from home.

Now, the Christian Endeavor only asks twenty cents a year, from each member, to be paid to the general Board, to be used for mission purposes, or for the support of theological chair in the college. Only twenty cents a year. There are few if any in the church who cannot pay this in addition to their regular church expenses, and if we all did it what a fund we might accumulate, how many weak churches

might be strengthened, and how much might be done toward educating young ministers, for the great work so much needed in the Brethren church. Dear Sisters, do you love the Brethren church? Then give of your means for its upbuilding, not only at home but elsewhere. Do you believe in its doctrines? Then give that its doctrines may be taught in many places where the Brethren church is not yet known.

Our National Conference will be at hand in a few weeks. The S. S. C. E. work will be reported and discussed. The Societies organized will be represented by delegate or letter. Will not those Societies who have not yet adopted the S. S. C. E. constitution do so at once, and report at Conference? Dear Sisters, I appeal to you, for the sake of our beloved church, do not pass this by without giving it your attention. Call a meeting of the sisters, discuss the matter, put before them the blessings to result from sympathy of interests in a common work, the blessings to result from united effort all over the brotherhood, and the blessing that will come to each heart that does its duty in the great cause of missions. If the matter is put before the sisters, by some earnest, self-sacrificing sister we believe they will all be ready to be organized into Christian Endeavor Societies. Let it be done at once that the Society may be represented at the Conference.

Remember, the work of the coming year will depend to a great extent upon the work done at the Conference in August. If there is no enthusiasm there, we cannot carry any back to our Societies at home: and if only a few Societies are represented, if in a majority of our churches, the sisters refuse to take hold of the work of Christian Endeavor, we cannot expect much enthusiasm at Conference. Let me further say that if the S. S. C. E. is a failure in the Brethren church, it is ourselves who make it such. Woman can do a successful united work for the cause of Christ if she will. The women of others churches have proven this. If we do not in the Brethren church, it is because we will not. Because we refuse to do it.

I close by appealing once more to the sisters to set about this work at